

MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

*Underdeveloped
Countries*

P. 29

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Also, class war

fight for peace (refuse to recognize
that they prevent peace)

Want: neutral SVN
and foreign rule

later, reunification (?)

not land reform as in NVN; can't
repeat mistakes.

Peace, Independence & Neutrality

SVN Party takes in wider range of members
than Kao Dzy; landlords, intellectuals.

Vs. Hanoi:

Note relation of insuring to "protection racket" : terrorism,
disorder, followed by offer to "prevent disorder, provide stability."



"No Communist regime has ever taken over by free election."

But that is partly because we have not allowed elections to be held in situations where they were likely to win: notably, SVN in 1956, where elections called for by the Geneva Accords would almost surely have led to a Communist takeover. Same would be true today?

Fact is, we are not exclusively concerned with the process by which Communists take over; we are not indifferent to a takeover by "legal" means. We want to prevent Communist expansion. Nor do we insist on being invited by popular or governmental request. (Bay of Pigs. Note range of activities in Laos, not all preceded by request of legal government.)

Why do we care?

What can we do about it? What are the limits on our influence?

Should we draw a line?

Should we put in US troops? Run the country?

Should we sit on change — or try to guide it?

Should we ~~insist~~ try to bring our 2d Class War power to bear?

What are the limits on our "loss" in SVN? How can we reduce costs?

W

Doubts as to firmness of US commitment — inevitable with our political process, press

Impatience compounds

If we are to deal with them, ~~what should~~ we most expect:

Change (of govs); role of military. (We would like a gov to deal with; but...)

f Polk doesn't say much about bonzes, or military; or, desire not
THEY ARE HELPING US ↑ to "modernize" but to run things
to exert power, articulate, into

Pres press conf - help the VN help themselves
not contain Chicom

US as a political force. (Attitude decisively important)

(Whose consent is necessary; who can threaten, punish?)

Anti-US as a tactical political device (Kland; Buddhists)

(Unifying a faction, or winning popular support) (Skybolt)

(Latent anti-foreignism; nationalism limiting US influence)

Revolution in the midst of a war (organized & directed campaigns).

in absence of parliamentary institutions; lack of a status quo
system, procedures, in which factions all think they have a stake.

Bonzes as "new men."

into over policies or men:

Resentment of US influence: US incapability to understand SVN.

[Laos - SVN parallel: Taylor - Kland
Sullivan - Phoumi]

Yet - current moves lead toward essentials of
a CI movement...

(What if SVN military split like Laos?!)

"Wars of national liberation" — wars directed against a gov, a regime [like Cuba II — in JFK eyes!] not at destroying its armies or its capabilities or occupying its territory or winning on specific issues [not a limited war, like a ^{labor} strike; like, labor tactics aimed at changing the management.] "General war" (limited by capabilities.)

In absence of accepted procedures for changing or influencing gov, role of personal loyalty, violence — including "Terrorism - by - intimidation" "disorders."

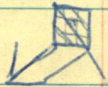
[Why were we not concerned that Buddhists & military lacked sufficient voice in Khmer gov?]

Role of local conditions — variations — in determining tactics of influence. Battle for attitudes, behavior, allegiance, rather than for territory. Competition to build authority; not only force, but conduct, notions, consistency, goals, promises.

Groups want to exercise power but not responsibility — i.e. to finish & propose and be tested by "solutions," position means to a goal. To accept position, responsibility to do this (to subject oneself to test) exposes one to
a) being wrong, and (b) being disliked (by ~~the~~ non-responsible subjects).
Better to be negative, critic, exercise vetos.

Careful to have non-responsible suggestions, critics

Pres
~~Frontier~~ : left him pardon.



This consistent with our support of some
insurgencies; but not with our support of repressive regimes.



WE VETO COMMUNIST SOLUTIONS;
do we accept responsibility for better ones?
Communism is against their interests, not just ours;
better alternatives are possible, for both.

Have we done enough to find them?

Do we want to be in the position of opposing all
change? because

- 1) change $\Rightarrow$ instability $\Rightarrow$ opportunities for Comms
- 2) we don't want responsibility for guiding change?

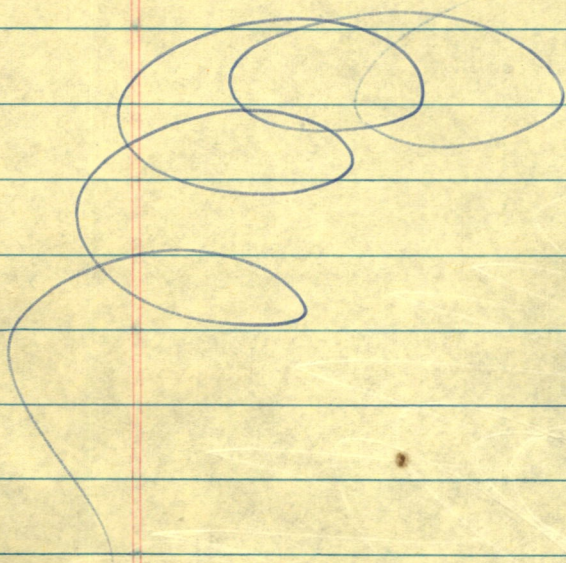
But process of guiding change will call for greater
understanding than providing a government resources to
repress change.

Unless we do things for the people, we expose ourselves
to use of anti-Bolshevism as an emotional tactic.

Did we expect NVN to pull back troops
in 1954?

Why did they?

What if they hadn't?



The varying intensity of various of our interests is measured by the costs + risks we are prepared to incur, the ~~sacrifice~~ competing interests we are prepared to sacrifice, to maintain them.

One that justifies the scale of effort we are making in SVN — and perhaps the only one — is the prevention of the spread of Communist regimes throughout the underdeveloped areas. A loss of SVN to Communist control would strongly contribute to the momentum of that spread, worsening the terms of our confrontation with the Bloc all over the world, though particularly in the underdeveloped areas and initially in Asia.

To say that halting this spread is important enough to justify the commitment of American lives is not to say that it is primarily a military problem. It is not. It has crucial aspects of violence — initially, assassination of officials

Bob Gronover

Seaborn?

1. PL/NM offensive in Laos? Plan?
2. Use USAF air in combat support?
3. How implement 2) evacuation or (4) reprisal (to small offense) during period when (1) Buddhists calling for Taylor removal
2) Catholics rioting (if they do)?
4. Put in US-Thai-Lao Troops in Panhandle?
5. Renewal 34A? (Khanh's attitude now?) Escort?

Hope Jac

Who controls what

(Correct impression that McConne didn't know of this coup).

Parameters

1. ^{a)} Power is held by: 1) Army (but Army not wholly united;
+ younger officers don't have good
answer to question, "Why not me?"

2) Buddhist leaders: even if not united, and
without broad support, they don't have strong competition, challenge
to authority, and I have proven ability to manipulate
demonstrations, emotions (e.g. by facts) and ^{to promote} ~~by~~ innovations.

2. Other factors: ^{b)} Authority; ^{c)} ability; ^{d)} energy; ^{e)} objectives corresponding to
US. ^{f)} acceptability to power factions, public.
Dilemmas:

1) Diem had all but f).

Minh, it is, had a, b (authority borne of "deliverance")

c, f: question as to c, d.

Khanh had a (though US could have backed Minh), ~~b~~, c

d, e; lacked b, f

Huoy has (some) b, c, d, e: not a or f

Dis
3. Advantages of a Buddhist-Ang gov:

- 1) Reactions of other groups (Will they exert power as aggressively?)
- 2) Ability of gov to devise/implement popular program in question.
- 3) Adequacy to get public support; prevent riots;

Analogy: doctor who passes an accident victim (a psychiatrist, or pediatrician) - risk of failure, malpractice

Conflict is

Competition for power, influence.

States rise over we have involved ourselves

Problems similar for challenged gov and for US as advisors:

need to tackle problems simultaneously: order, development, gov processes. Economic/political/social.

Risks to US: failure - even at single objectives.

Many forms of failure.
Bad faith.
Forego uses of resources - as investment grows.

How/Pace attention Adverse

US deaths

Political costs - as other costs grow, success is slow + elusive.

Alternative: letting nations go by default.

Responsibilities of our power

Helping hand - yet conscious

Institutions built to handle large problems that can be factored

USAID in economic aid, military

Moreover, in fields: AID tailored to long-run devel.

Military to fighting to win

State to dealing through channels, established rules.

4. Visible you must have Army backing.

Preferably, Army should serve / support you, a civilian you with ability to enlist factional & popular support behind broad program.

5. Army has real feeling of authority based on 1) role in Diem camp; 2) responsibilities of power.

6. Desire of US to avoid French-type colonial war:

- 1) huge investment (possibly worth it? if successful?)
- 2) not effective

Hence, reluctant to commit so many ^{US} troops & advisors that SVN will "turn over the war to us".

7. Ambiguity: are we "helping someone" ^(deserving) who has asked us for help" (& will stop if they stop asking, or cease being deserving) ^(or from working in) or are we keeping the NVN/Chams out of SEA as a matter of vital or major interest? In latter case, they are fighting over ^{our} ^{role down} even for us; and we can keep out only so long as they are doing it effectively, or so long as increasing US troops would lower effectiveness (6).

8. Uncertainty as to Buddhists' aims: personal power? VC-infected? neutralism, anti-US? Deal with Kham?

9. Individual ambitions: Kham; Tri Quang, Tan Chau;

Goals in SEA

1. What is it we are offering — other than
2. "US should not be tied to preconditions" : but how
are we to avoid this, when all changes in gov are
ad hoc and "irregular," most are violent?
How do we avoid responsibility (and with it, commitment — of prestige,
to success, to use of "necessary means").

3.

CFR speech

Who to back?

~~What can~~

What criteria to use?

Weights (to process, "legitimacy"; order;

prosecution of the war...

How strongly to back him? What means?

What do we want?

a) Development

Progress toward representative gov,

democracy,

Freedom from Communist domination

Objections

Authoritarian gov can provide order in short-run, security; but will it keep in touch with desires and needs of people, will it stimulate enthusiasm, energy, imagination in interests of development and pacification (if necessary).

4

How much do we want to pursue certain ends — at what cost and risk?

At risk ^{in involvement} are: 1) US prestige

Tendency to describe SVN-Loss as a bog, a swamp.

↳

Power we can bring to bear — in physical terms — is enormous; incomparably greater than that of the "opponent," or the friendly developing nation, or even than any ally who might have tried earlier. Yet ~~we are not guaranteed success; and~~ that very ~~contrast~~ disparity in power means that it is particularly costly to us to fail, to lose, to be beaten & by a strong opponent.

Such a failure would undermine our leadership, ~~would~~ ~~undermine~~ our evident value as an ally or formidable enemy as an opponent, all over the world, including areas where the intrinsic stakes are much higher. It calls into question the relevance of our great physical capabilities: it raises doubts about our will to use our ~~own~~ instruments of power, or our wit in doing so.